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CUET · HOME SCIENCE · CLASS XII · CODE 315

Fashion Design and Merchandising

CUET unit: Unit IV — Fabric and Apparel

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Snapshot

- Introduces fashion design and merchandising as career options within the garment/apparel industry and traces how merchandising evolved from barter to ready-to-wear.
- Establishes core fashion terminology — Fashion, Style, Fads, Classic, Couture, Prêt-à-porter — that CUET routinely tests as direct definition MCQs.
- Maps the historical development of fashion (France as the centre, Industrial Revolution, sewing machine, Levi Strauss denim, ready-to-wear) and the bell-shaped Fashion Cycle.
- Explains fashion merchandising functions (manufacturing, buying, promoting, selling), the three levels of merchandising and the six "Merchandising Rights" (right merchandise, place, time, quantity, price, promotion).
- Lists skills required (forecasting, analytical, communication), retail structures (small single-unit / department / chain stores), major store divisions and career options (Visual Merchandise Designer, Set Designer, Interior Designer, etc.).

Detailed Notes

2.1 Core concepts

- Fashion merchandising emerged as a new specialisation after 1920, when "ready-to-wear" was born and apparel became the most important merchandise in department stores (NCERT Introduction, p. 176–177).
- Fashion merchandising includes producing raw material, apparel and accessories, and retail stores that sell them; it equips one to respond to what, why and when a style becomes a fashion — in short, "planning, buying and selling" (NCERT §Significance, p. 177).
- Fashion terminology — Fashion = style or styles most popular at a given time; Style = particular look/characteristic in apparel or accessories that always remains even though it may go in and out of fashion; Fad = short-lived fashion that can come and go in a single season (e.g., hot pants, baggy pants, unmatched buttons); Classic = style that never becomes completely obsolete, characterised by simplicity (e.g., blazer jacket, polo shirt, Chanel suit) (NCERT §Fashion Terminology, p. 177–178).
- France became the centre of fashion in the early 18th century because of royal court support (King Louis XIV) and the silk industry; **Couture** is the art of dress

- making — male designer is **couturier**, female is **couturière** (NCERT §France — The Centre of Fashion, p. 178).
- Industrial Revolution brought spinning jenny and power looms; in 1859 Isaac Singer developed the foot treadle for the sewing machine, which democratised fashion (NCERT §Fashion Development, p. 178–179).
 - In 1849, Levi Strauss used tent/wagon-cover fabric to make long-wearing pants for labourers — the beginning of denims, the only apparel that has remained the same for nearly 150 years (NCERT p. 179).
 - Women started wearing separate skirts and blouses in the 1880s, beginning ready-to-wear for women; Yves Saint Laurent (YSL) is credited as the first French haute couturier to launch a full prêt-à-porter line in the 1960s (NCERT p. 179).
 - Fashion Cycle is bell-shaped with stages: Introduction → Rise (increase in sales) → Peak/Culmination → Decline → Rejection/Obsolescence (NCERT §Fashion Evolution, Fig. 12.1, p. 179–180).
 - Fashion merchandising = planning to have the right merchandise, at the right time, at the right place, at the right price and with the right sales promotion to achieve maximum profit; a Fashion Merchandiser converts inspiration into design and addresses planning, production, promotion and distribution (NCERT §Fashion Merchandising, p. 180).
 - Four functional roles of a merchandiser: manufacturing (input on fabric/clothing construction), buying (target market + trend forecasting), promoting (fashion shows, visual merchandising) and selling (display, recommendations on production) (NCERT p. 180–181).
 - Three levels of merchandising: Retail Organisation Merchandising, Buying Agency Merchandising (procurement office for buyers), Export House Merchandising (buyer merchandiser + production merchandiser) (NCERT p. 181–182).
 - Target Market is the category of consumers being targeted; reached through Market Segmentation — Demographic, Geographic, Psychographic and Behavioural (NCERT p. 182).
 - Six Merchandising Rights: Right Merchandise, At Right Place, At Right Time, In Right Quantity, Right Price, With Right Promotion (NCERT box, p. 183).
 - Fashion retail businesses are of three types: Small Single-unit Store (neighbourhood, family-operated), Department Store (separate sections — clothing, sporting goods, electronics, etc.), and Chain Stores (share brand and central management, standardised practices) (NCERT §Fashion Retail Organisations, p. 183–184).
 - Major divisions of a fashion retail organisation: Merchandising; Sales and Promotion; Finance and Control; Operational; Personnel and Branch Store division (NCERT p. 184).
 - Three primary skills for a career: Forecasting ability, Analytical ability ("dollars and sense" part), Communication ability (NCERT §Preparing for a Career, p. 184–185).

- Education routes: Certificate/Diploma (6 months to 1 year), 2-year Master's, 4-year Bachelor's in fashion design or merchandising (NCERT p. 185).
- Popular career options listed: Visual Merchandise Designers, Fashion Designers, Set Designers, Interior Designers (NCERT §Scope, p. 185–186).

Fashion Design and Merchandising builds on lehe201's design vocabulary and connects it to the Indian apparel industry — which is the second-largest manufacturing employer in India after agriculture, contributing ~5% of GDP, ~7% of industrial production, ~12% of total exports, and employing ~45 million people directly and another 60 million in allied sectors (per Ministry of Textiles). The industry spans cotton, silk, wool, jute, handloom, handicraft and synthetic textile clusters across India.

The core distinction is between four time-graded fashion phenomena: Fashion is the currently popular style or styles; Style is the underlying form that recurs (a 'style' can go in and out of fashion repeatedly); Fad is a season-only spike with weak design fundamentals; Classic is the style that never becomes completely obsolete because of its simplicity, balance and timeless proportion. Indian classics include the kurta, sari, sherwani; Indian fads have included Bell-bottoms (1970s), Cargo pants (early 2000s), athleisure (2020s).

Fashion's geographic and historical evolution traces from France (Louis XIV's court, silk industry, the rise of Parisian Couture houses in the 19th century — Worth, Poiret, Chanel, Dior, YSL), through the Industrial Revolution (spinning jenny, power loom), to Isaac Singer's 1859 foot-treadle sewing machine that democratised garment-making, Levi Strauss's 1849 long-wearing pants from tent fabric (the origin of denim — the only apparel category essentially unchanged for ~150 years), the 1880s emergence of separate skirts and blouses (the beginning of women's ready-to-wear), and Yves Saint Laurent's 1960s launch of the first full prêt-à-porter line by a French haute couturier. India's modern fashion history dates from the post-independence era — the rise of Indian designers like Rohit Khosla (the founder of contemporary Indian designer fashion), Ritu Kumar, Tarun Tahiliani, Manish Malhotra, Sabyasachi Mukherjee, Rohit Bal, Anita Dongre.

Fashion Cycle has five stages plotted as a bell curve: Introduction (designers interpret incoming trends, very few produced, prices high), Rise (acceptance increases, manufacturers scale up, prices begin to fall), Peak/Culmination (maximum acceptance, mass production, lowest unit cost, widely available), Decline (over-saturation, retailers discount, designers move on), Rejection/Obsolescence (consumers reject as 'out of style'). Bell-curve grouping yields three phases: introductory, acceptance, rejection. CUET regularly tests both the five stages and the three phases.

Fashion Merchandising is the discipline of moving the right product (right merchandise) to the right consumer (right place, right time, right quantity) at the right price with the right promotion — the six Merchandising Rights. The four functional roles of a merchandiser — manufacturing input, buying, promoting, selling — span the whole product life-cycle from raw material selection to consumer billing. The three levels of

merchandising — Retail Organisation, Buying Agency, Export House — correspond to the value-chain positions: in-store retail, intermediation, and B2B export. India's merchandising industry has built large Buying Agency offices in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Tirupur and Ludhiana that source for Walmart, Target, H&M, Zara, GAP, M&S, Carrefour, Tesco.

Market segmentation enables targeted product positioning: Demographic (age, sex, income, religion, family size, occupation, education — the most quantifiable variables), Geographic (city, state, region, climate — relevant for monsoon vs winter fashion or hill-station vs coastal market), Psychographic (lifestyle, interests, social class, personality, opinions — the basis of luxury versus value brands), Behavioural (usage rate, brand loyalty, purchase occasion, benefits sought — the basis of festive collections and gifting strategies).

Fashion retail organisations come in three formats: Small Single-unit Stores (neighbourhood, family-operated, low overheads, hyper-local), Department Stores (multi-category, mid-to-large, e.g., Shoppers Stop, Lifestyle, Pantaloons, Westside), and Chain Stores (multiple branches with central management, standardised practices and pricing — e.g., Reliance Trends, Max Fashion, Big Bazaar/Smart Bazaar). The major divisions within a fashion retail organisation are Merchandising, Sales & Promotion, Finance & Control, Operational, Personnel and Branch Store divisions — corresponding to typical functional departments.

Three primary skills for the career are Forecasting ability (sensing trend direction via fashion week coverage, runway analysis, street-style scanning, social media listening), Analytical ability (the 'dollars and sense' part — pricing, margin, inventory turnover, sell-through), and Communication ability (vendor negotiation, ad copy, retail floor briefing, B2B client management). Education routes range from short certificate/diploma (6 months to 1 year — NIFT's continuing education, IGNOU, private institutes), to 4-year Bachelor's (NIFT, Pearl Academy, NID, Symbiosis, NMIMS) and 2-year Master's (NIFT, IIM-A's MDP). Career options include Visual Merchandise Designer, Fashion Designer, Set Designer, Interior Designer, Trend Forecaster, Buyer, Brand Manager, Retail Manager.

2.2 Definitions to memorise

Term	Definition	Page
Fashion	The style or styles most popular at a given time	177
Style	Any particular look or characteristic in apparel/accessories; specific style always remains	177
Fad	Short-lived fashion that can come and go in a single season; lacks design strength	178
Classic	Style that never becomes completely obsolete; characterised by simplicity (e.g., blazer, polo shirt, Chanel suit)	178

Term	Definition	Page
Couture	The art of dress making (French tradition)	178
Couturier / Couturière	Male / female designer	178
Prêt-à-porter	Ready-to-wear; factory-made clothing sold finished in standardised sizes	179
Fashion Merchandising	Planning to have right merchandise, time, place, price and promotion for max profit	180
Fashion Merchandiser	Person who converts inspiration into design and addresses planning, production, promotion, distribution	180
Target Market	Category of consumers one is targeting for selling the product	182
Market Segmentation	Dividing a larger market into subsets of consumers with common needs	182
Croquis	Outline or rough sketch — fashion figure of 8½ to 10 heads	188
Visual merchandising	In-store display design that drives consumer attention and conversion	185
Brand	Identity that distinguishes one seller's products from competitors	India context
Haute couture	High-end, custom-fitted, hand-made garment by a French couture house	178
Trend forecasting	Sensing colour/fabric/silhouette direction 6-18 months ahead	India context
Sell-through rate	% of stock sold within a season — key analytical metric	India context
Sales-floor merchandising	Day-to-day in-store category management	India context
Buying agent	Intermediary between overseas buyers and Indian manufacturers	181
Export House	Indian company exporting garments to international buyers	182
In-store division: Personnel	HR for store staff and management	184

2.3 Diagrams / processes to remember

- **Fig. 12.1 Stages of Fashion Cycle (p. 179):** bell-shaped curve plotting Acceptance (sales volume) against time — Introduction → Rise → Peak → Decline (three phases: introductory, acceptance, rejection).
- **Fashion Retail Businesses chart (p. 183):** Small Single-unit Store, Department Store, Chain Store.

- **Croquis proportions (Practical 1, p. 188–189):** 10-head central line — eye line $\frac{1}{2}$ head, shoulder $1\frac{1}{2}$, bust just below 2, waist just below 3, hip $3\frac{1}{2}$, end of torso just above $4\frac{1}{2}$, knees $6\frac{1}{2}$, ankles at 9.

2.5 Key data / fashion-merchandising table (Indian context)

Item	Value / fact	Source
Ready-to-wear born	1920	NCERT p. 177
Sewing machine foot treadle	Isaac Singer, 1859	NCERT p. 179
Levi Strauss denim pants	1849 (tent/wagon-cover fabric)	NCERT p. 179
First full prêt-à-porter line	Yves Saint Laurent, 1960s	NCERT p. 179
Women's ready-to-wear beginning	1880s	NCERT p. 179
France's fashion patron	King Louis XIV	NCERT p. 178
Fashion cycle stages	Introduction → Rise → Peak → Decline → Rejection	NCERT p. 179
Fashion cycle phases	Introductory; Acceptance; Rejection	NCERT p. 180
Number of Merchandising Rights	Six	NCERT p. 183
Six rights	Right Merchandise; Place; Time; Quantity; Price; Promotion	NCERT p. 183
Levels of merchandising	Retail; Buying Agency; Export House	NCERT pp. 181–182
Market segmentation types	Demographic; Geographic; Psychographic; Behavioural	NCERT p. 182
Three primary career skills	Forecasting; Analytical; Communication	NCERT p. 184
Croquis size	$8\frac{1}{2}$ –10 heads tall	NCERT p. 188
Indian apparel industry rank	2nd largest manufacturing employer (after agriculture)	India context
Apparel % of Indian GDP	~5%	India context
Apparel % of exports	~12%	India context
Direct apparel jobs in India	~45 million	India context
NIFT founding year (India context)	1986	India context
Indian designers (notable)	Ritu Kumar; Tarun Tahiliani; Sabyasachi; Manish Malhotra; Rohit Bal	India context
	Reliance Trends; Max; Westside; Pantaloons	India context

Item	Value / fact	Source
Indian retail chains (examples)		

2.4 Common confusions / NTA trap points

- Fads vs Classics: Fads are short-lived (one season), Classics never become obsolete — NTA often swaps examples (blazer/Chanel suit = Classic, NOT Fad).
- Couture (hand-made, custom) vs Prêt-à-porter (factory-made, standardised sizes) — YSL is the first to launch full prêt-à-porter, not couture.
- Sewing machine foot treadle: 1859, Isaac Singer (not Levi Strauss). Levi Strauss = 1849, denim pants.
- Market segmentation types — Demographic (age/sex/income) vs Psychographic (lifestyle/interests) vs Behavioural (opinion/usage rating); easy to confuse psychographic and behavioural.
- Fashion Cycle has THREE phases (introductory, acceptance, rejection) but FIVE stages (introduction, rise, peak, decline, rejection/obsolescence).
- Fashion merchandising is "planning, buying and selling" — not just "designing and selling".
- Bell-bottoms and unmatched buttons are **fads**, not classics.
- Singer (1859) and Strauss (1849) — note the inverted chronology (Strauss earlier).
- YSL launched **prêt-à-porter**, not couture — couture is bespoke.
- Croquis = **8½ to 10 heads tall**, not 7-head realistic figure.

Practice MCQs

PYQ Alignment

This chapter feeds directly into CUET Home Science Unit IV (Fabric and Apparel) and typically yields ~8–10 MCQs each year. Past CUET papers favour direct-definition questions on Fashion/Style/Fad/Classic, identification of historical milestones (Singer 1859, Levi Strauss 1849, YSL prêt-à-porter), correctly ordered Fashion Cycle stages, the four types of market segmentation, the six Merchandising Rights, and the three levels of merchandising — all of which are covered above.